



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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30 May 2007

RUS102556.E

Russia: Status of medical booklets or cards (2006 - May 2007)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Medical booklet

In a 31 November 2006 article, the Moscow-based daily *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* noted that medical booklets are currently in use in the Russian Federation. This was corroborated by a consular official at the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Ottawa during a 1 March 2007 telephone interview with the Research Directorate, in which the official provided some details on the medical booklet. Medical booklets are generally stored at a patient's local polyclinic (Russia 1 Mar. 2007), a "multispecialty neighbourhood health center" (eMedicine 11 Jan. 2007) corresponding to a person's place of registration, and cannot be used in any other context, although in some individual cases it is possible for a person to keep his or her own medical booklet at home (Russia 1 Mar. 2007). If a person moves to a new locality, his or her medical booklet is transferred to the new polyclinic (ibid.). According to the consular official, the booklets resemble notebooks and contain a patient's medical history (ibid.). However, the consular official explained that different polyclinics or private clinics may have different ways to file their patients' information and that many cards from Soviet times are still being used (ibid.).

During a 30 April 2007 telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a consular official from the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Ottawa stated that medical booklets are confidential documents. If a person wishes to obtain his or her medical booklet, he or she can only obtain it in Russia upon presentation of his or her passport (Russia 30 Apr. 2007). The consular official indicated that he had never come across a case in which a Russian citizen obtained his or her medical booklet from outside the Russian Federation (ibid.).

According to media sources, the Russian government plans to replace current medical booklets with electronic ones (*Moskovskiy Komsomolets* 31 Nov. 2006; AMI-TASS 13 Oct. 2006). AMI-TASS, the medical affiliate of Russia's ITAR-TASS news agency, reported in October 2006 that Svetlana Orlova, the vice-speaker of the Federation Council, announced the government's plan to replace Russian citizens' medical booklets with an [translation] "electronic health passport," in keeping with the government's national health project (ibid.). Orlova stated that the electronic passports were still being discussed, but she believed that they would be approved since they had been successfully tested in Saint-Petersburg in 2004 (ibid.). The only remaining step was for the government to adopt the relevant legislation (ibid.), of which no recent mention could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Similarly, in November 2006, *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* reported that the Ministry of Information Technologies has proposed replacing [translation] "medical information cards" with electronic cards, or [translation] "health passports." The current medical booklet is reportedly problematic because it deteriorates quickly, is easy to lose, and can be unavailable if a person requires medical attention when travelling to other cities, where medical personnel will not have access to a person's medical history (*Moskovskiy Komsomolets* 31 Nov. 2006). As part of its national health project, the Russian government has made it a priority to implement a system of rapid information exchange between medical institutions (ibid.).

Health card

On 1 March 2007, a consular official from the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Ottawa further noted that there is a health card that proves that the bearer is entitled to medical care as a Russian citizen. He noted that it mentions the bearer's name and social security number but does not contain a photograph (Russia 1 Mar. 2007). The card contains a single number which identifies the bearer as being entitled to health care in Russia within the framework of the country's compulsory medical insurance program; this number is only used for health care (ibid. 30 Apr. 2007).

A specimen of a medical insurance card can be found on the Web site of the Territorial Foundation for Compulsory Medical Insurance (Territorial'nyi fond obyazatel'nogo meditsinskogo strakhovaniya, TFOMS) in Ivanovo Oblast (Ivanovo Oblast TFOMS n.d.). The Ivanovo Oblast TFOMS is [translation] "a non-commercial autonomous state financial and credit institution mandated to ensure the universality of compulsory medical insurance in Ivanovo Oblast" (ibid.). The card contains the following information (ibid.):

[Translation]

Medical Insurance Organization for Compulsory Medical Insurance, Ivanovo Oblast

INSURANCE POLICY

for the compulsory medical insurance of a Russian Federation citizen

Series 372400 No. 6022600150

This policy grants Ivanov, Ivan Ivanovich
(Family name Firstname Patronymic)

10-01-1950 Male
(Date of birth Sex)

Machine manufacturing company ,
(Place of work or study)

Worker 12 Sovetskaya St., apt. 105, Ivanovo
(Social status) (Permanent address)

the right to receive medical assistance under the Compulsory Medical Insurance Agreement for the period covered by that agreement, in accordance with the Compulsory Medical Insurance Program, from _____ to 12-04-2008

I have familiarized myself with the conditions governing this insurance _____
(signature)

Date issued: 18 March 2004
Compulsory Medical Insurance Branch Director
(position)

(signature)

[On the stamp]: Ivanovo Branch

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

AMI-TASS [Moscow, in Russian]. 13 October 2006. Olga Sitnikova. "Meditsinskie kartochki rossiyan planiruetsya polnost'yu zamenit' na elektronnye pasporta zdorov'ya." <<http://www.ami-tass.ru/article/15198.html>> [Accessed 13 Feb. 2007]

eMedicine. 11 January 2007. Slava Gaufberg. "Emergency Medicine in Russia." <<http://www.emedicine.com/emerg/topic725.htm>> [Accessed 7 Mar. 2007]

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Moskovskiy Komsomolets [Moscow, in Russian]. 31 Nov. 2006. Ekaterina Pichugina. "Meditsinskaya kartochka

stanet elektronnoy." <www.mk.ru/numbers/2438/article85613.htm> [Accessed 25 Jan. 2007]

Russia. 30 April 2007. Embassy of the Russian Federation, Ottawa. Telephone interview with a consular official.

_____. 1 March 2007. Embassy of the Russian Federation, Ottawa. Telephone interview with a consular official.

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: American Medical Center [Moscow], European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Factiva, *Izvestia*, *Kommersant*, Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation, *Moscow Times*, World News Connection (WNC).

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